



Department of Administration

# Nevada State Library, Archives and Public Records

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Congratulations on your appointment to serve as a public library trustee for your community! You are to be commended for your interest and involvement. Your active participation is needed to help Nevada public libraries grow stronger and increase services to meet the informational, educational and recreational needs of the people of Nevada.

This page provides a link to the *Nevada Public Library Trustee Manual*. The manual will serve as a guide to help you get started and become comfortable with your role as a public library trustee. It is designed to provide you with basic information and to be used as a quick reference for helping you do your job in an efficient, effective manner. Think of it as a map by which you can explore the opportunities, responsibilities, and liabilities of serving as a public library trustee.

All public library boards are bound by a variety of laws that govern their policies and operating procedures. You will find copies of Nevada Revised Statutes (NRS) Chapter 379, Public Libraries contained in the manual. While all Nevada public libraries share legal authority described in the NRS, each library serves the unique needs of the local community. Please use this manual to develop your individual role and participation as a public library trustee.

- [Trustee Academy \(Log in required\)](#)
- [Nevada Public Library Trustee Manual](#)
- [NRS 379 - Public Libraries](#)
- [Nevada Open Meeting Law Portal](#)
- [Nevada Open Meeting Law Manual](#)
- [Nevada Open Meeting Law Compliance Form](#)
- [Nevada Open Meeting Law Compliance Checklist](#)
- [Nevada Public Library and Trustee Organization \(PLATO\)](#)
- [United for Libraries](#)

## Contact

Tammy Westergard  
Assistant Administrator for Library &  
Development Services  
775-684-3306  
[twestergard@admin.nv.gov](mailto:twestergard@admin.nv.gov)

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## CHAPTER 8. Library Board Meetings

*The art of compromise is the key to effective board meetings.*

Regular board meetings and committee meetings are where most of the board's work is done. What you do in meetings can make the difference between an effective and an ineffective board. Poor meetings can alienate staff, damage the board team, waste your time and the time of the other board members, cause turmoil in the community and actually hamper the operation of the library.

Careful preparation is the key to meetings that produce results. Here are a few guidelines for planning and conducting an effective meeting:

- Decide what is to be accomplished.
- Define the purpose in clear terms.
- Develop a written agenda.
- Begin on time, and end on time.

You can expect the board chairperson to run the meetings and keep the board moving toward good decisions. However, it is no less each board member's responsibility to:

- Attend all meetings.
- Prepare well for meetings.
- Take part in all discussions.
- Cooperate with fellow board members to make meetings work.
- Adhere to parliamentary law and to relevant state laws.
- Learn traditional meeting practices of your board and follow them.
- Practice the art of compromise with other members of the team.
- Practice the art of listening and merging your ideas with those of the others.
- Work toward consensus on issues.
- Focus all deliberations on the best interests of library users.
- Publicly support the board decisions.

### **Nevada Open Meeting Law (NRS 241)**

All members of the board should become familiar with the Nevada Open Meeting Law and the *Nevada Open Meeting Law Manual*. In order to strengthen the 1991 law, the 1997 Nevada State legislature has enacted certain amendments to NRS Chapter 241. Take special note of the amended statutes and their requirements. The complete text of the law, along with definitions and answers to common questions are essential reading for all board members.

The Open Meeting Law, requiring that all meetings be held in public, is designed to protect the public from secret dealings by public agency boards. Public notice of regular meetings must be given at least 3 working days before the meeting listing the time, place, and location, where the notice has been posted and an agenda listing specific items to be considered (NRS 241.020., 1997). The agenda must include a clear and concise statement of all topics to be discussed and must identify action items.

There have been challenges to the Open Meeting Law related to library board meetings in Nevada. A thorough knowledge of the law as it is stated in the NRS and abiding by the law should minimize such challenges.

The complete text of the law, definitions and answers to common questions are published by the Attorney General's Office in *Nevada Open Meeting Law Manual*, which should be available at every public library.

### **Parliamentary Rules:**

Board meetings should be conducted according to established parliamentary rules, such as Robert's Rules of Order, or some other parliamentary procedure guide agreed on by all board members. That set of rules is intended to set a businesslike and courteous tone, allow for ample discussion of the issues, protect the right of all board members to be heard on the issues, and not allow the discussion to get out of control.

You should have a basic understanding of parliamentary rules so that you can be a part of the process of moving quickly and efficiently through a good meeting agenda. When a disagreement among board members occurs about the way to proceed, consult the parliamentary guide specified by your bylaws. As a "quick help," a one page Guide to Parliamentary Procedures has been included in the Appendix.

**Caution:** Parliamentary rules are not intended to impede meeting process, but simply to ensure that the rights of all board members are protected and meetings move towards action. Using parliamentary rules for the purpose of impeding the meeting process is unethical and detrimental to the team atmosphere.

### **Agenda:**

Your board meeting should run according to an agenda prepared by the director and the board chairperson. The purpose of the agenda is to set a clear direction for the meeting. The board chairperson will ask the board to formally vote to approve the agenda plan at the beginning of the meeting. When the board approves a written meeting agenda, board members agree to discuss those issues on the approved agenda.

Even though the board chairperson and the director prepare the agenda, all board members have a right to place issues on the agenda by bringing those issues to the attention of the director or the board president. However, anything you want on the agenda must be requested well in advance of the board meeting, allowing time for a final agenda to be legally posted at least 3 working days before the meeting.

Socializing with other board members is important to building the team atmosphere, but should be done before and after the meeting, and kept to a minimum during the meeting. Extreme caution should be exercised by board members in avoiding discussion of specific library issues and matters with each other on social occasions, as this may violate the Open Meeting Law.

### **Minutes:**

The meeting minutes, when approved by a formal vote or by consensus of the board, are the official legal records of what happened at the board meeting. The minutes are also an important communication between the board and constituents. If you are a new board member, you should examine the minutes of board meetings for at least the past year. That will give you a good perspective on the issues the board has faced and how the board handled those issues.

Any board member has a right to ask the board to correct errors in the minutes before the board accepts the minutes as a record of the previous meeting. Board members do not have a right to demand that their reasons for voting a certain way or their detailed views about an issue be recorded in the minutes. Every board member should have full opportunity to express a viewpoint prior to the vote on any issue, so there's no good reason to extend the debate into the voting process. Your "yes" or "no" vote will represent your views on the issue.

Minutes of Nevada public library board meetings are permanent records that must be available to the public within 30 days after a meeting. Board minutes must be retained by the local library for at least five years, then transferred to the State Archives. (NRS 239.080-1 25; 241.035)

## **Reports:**

During the meeting, the board members will likely hear reports from committees, the director and staff. The reports will provide the background and information the board needs to deal with the issues on the agenda for the rest of the meeting.

Often, the reports will conclude with a recommendation for board action. If those reports were in written form and sent to the board members prior to the meeting, you should be well prepared to take action on those reports without having them read to you during the meeting. Those presenting reports during the meeting will simply highlight information, clarify items, and answer questions.

## **Motions:**

A motion is a formal request or proposal for the board to take action. Motions usually come from two major sources, committee reports and director recommendations, but board members may make motions at any time in accordance with the parliamentary guide.

To make a motion, you simply address the chairperson and say, "I move that..." and state the action you wish the board to take. Most motions require that another board member support the request for action by seconding the motion.

Once the motion is seconded, the chairperson restates it. The board then begins discussion of the motion. Some motions, such as the motion to adjourn, do not require discussion. By requiring a motion on an issue prior to discussion, the board focuses discussion on agenda items only and stays on track.

After a motion is made and seconded, there should be plenty of time to discuss freely all the pros and cons of any issue. At the same time, the chairperson and all board members must work to keep the discussion moving towards a decision - that's the reason the issue is on the agenda.

Once the motion has been discussed thoroughly, the chairperson will call for board members to vote on the motion. You may be asked to vote by saying "aye" (yes) or "nay" (no) in a voice vote, by a show of hands or in a roll-call vote. Your vote will be recorded in the minutes.

*Abstaining rather than voting "yes" or "no" on a motion before the board should be very rare and is usually appropriate only when you have a conflict of interests in the issue before the board. You are appointed to express an opinion on the issues, and abstaining expresses no opinion.*

Once the vote is taken, the chairperson will declare that the motion passes or fails. Upon completion of an item on the agenda, the chairperson moves on to the next agenda item.

## **Committees:**

The many and complex issues with which your board works cannot always be handled efficiently by the full board. Many issues may be delegated to board committees for study with the understanding the committees will make recommendations to the full board.

At some time in your service on the library board you will be asked to serve on at least one committee and you need to understand the nature and purpose of committees. Committee work is a good place for board members to offer any special expertise they may have, but service on committees is not limited to experts on the committee subject. Committee service is a good way to learn more about the library.

Often committee members are selected from people outside the board so that additional expertise can be utilized by the board through the committee. Involving non-board members also builds ownership among other members of the public and opens a new avenue of communication between library and community.

Committees expand the capabilities and act as an extension of the board. Committees are always responsible to the full board and have no power or authority beyond what is granted to them by the full board. The only actions committees can traditionally take is to study an issue assigned by the full board and make recommendations to the full board about the assigned issues. Board members not on the committee should feel free to ask questions and get clarification from committee members, but avoid repeating work the committee has done. Meetings of the full board should not be used as a time to conduct committee meetings. The purpose of the committee is to save time for the board. If the full board repeats the committee discussions after the committee reports to the board, the board has not saved time but rather doubled the time spent on the issue.

Your board may already have standing or permanent committees that are described in the bylaws of the library and function year round. As certain important issues arise, the board may also appoint temporary or "ad hoc" committees to study those issues for the board.

At certain times, the board may meet as a committee of the whole. This is done to allow time for in-depth discussion of one subject. The issue is then presented as a committee report at the regular board meeting where formal action is taken.

Your board may also have an executive committee. This committee is usually composed of the board officers and the director. It often has limited powers to act for the board in emergencies, but must have all actions ratified by the board at the next regular meeting.

When you are appointed to a committee, it is your responsibility to learn the mission of the committee, when and where the committee meets, and the names of other members. You should also examine the history of the committee and the minutes of their meetings for at least the past year.

Help your committee stay focused on its responsibility and accountability to the full board. Although committee meetings are usually not as formal as a full board meeting, they should have a chairperson, a distinct structure, agenda and goals. When the committee completes its meeting, there should be a clear result of the meeting that can be reported to the full board.

*Committees are given the charge to study and recommend, not making the board decision. Committees are a valuable extension of the board, but only if they work in an orderly and accountable fashion. Committees, as described in this chapter, are subject to the Open Meeting Law.*

## **Summary of Open Meeting Law (NRS, Chap. 241)**

The intent of the Nevada Open Meeting Law is to ensure that the actions and deliberations of public bodies be conducted in an open manner allowing members of the public to attend and participate. The full text of the Open Meeting Law as well as the Open Meeting Law Handbook is located on the website of the Nevada Attorney General located at [www.ag.state.nv.us](http://www.ag.state.nv.us).

The definition of a "public body" as put forth in NRS 241.015 (3) includes any administrative, advisory, executive or legislative body elected or appointed to represent the public body and includes committees and subcommittees.

A "meeting" is defined as a gathering of members at which a quorum is present and includes a series of meetings in which all members collectively participate. (NRS 241.015(2))

A "quorum" is simply a majority of the members.

### **NOTICES:**

Written notices must be posted by 9:00 AM at least 3 working days before a meeting is conducted and shall be posted at the principal office of the public body and in not less than 3 separate, prominent places within the jurisdiction of the public body. Notices that are mailed must be mailed before 9:00 AM at least 3 working days before the meeting.

The notice must contain the following elements:

- Time, place and location of the meeting
- Locations of posted notices
- An agenda
- A statement of accommodations for persons with disabilities
- A statement that agenda items may be taken out of order
- A statement explaining public comment limitations, within reason.

### **AGENDA:**

The agenda must include:

A clear, concise explanation of topics scheduled to be discussed. Specific language must be used (avoid generic items/terms) and the descriptions must be reasonable to allow the average person an understanding of the topic.

A list of items on which action will be taken and must be clearly noted as such.

A period devoted to public comment by the general public as well as discussion of the comments. Items brought forth through public comment may not be acted upon until properly placed on a future meeting agenda.

### **MEETING:**

The following rules are established for meetings of public bodies:

- Stick to the agenda.
- Keep minutes, include: date, time and place of meeting; members who were present and members who were absent; substance of all matters proposed, discussed or decided; substance of remarks made by members of the general public if they so indicate as well as inclusion of written comments, if they so indicate.
- Voting may not be done by secret ballot. Action occurs if a majority (of members present) vote in favor of a motion.

- Closed meetings: are held to discuss the character, misconduct, competence or health of a person.
- Closed meetings **may not** be held to discuss the appointment of a person to the board, consider the character, alleged misconduct, professional competence or physical or mental health of a board member; to conduct attorney-client communications; or to discuss indebtedness.
- Closed meetings may only be conducted after a motion to move to a closed session is approved by a majority vote of the board members. Only the stated business of a closed meeting may be discussed. No action may be taken during a closed session.
- Public Comment Period: must accommodate members of the general public desiring to raise issues for discussion. Reasonable rules and regulations must be established and made known to keep an orderly and productive meeting.

## Guide to Parliamentary Procedure

<b>MOTION</b>	<b>SECOND REQUIRED</b>	<b>DEBATABLE</b>	<b>AMENDABLE</b>	<b>VOTE REQUIRED</b>	<b>RECONSIDER- ABLE</b>
Main Motion	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority	Yes
Adjourn	Yes	No, Time Only	No, Time Only	Majority	No
Accept a Report	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority	Yes
Amend	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority	Yes
Refer to Committee	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority	If Committee has not begun work in the matter
Point of Information	No	No	No	Is not voted on	No
Lay on the Table	Yes	No	No	Majority	No
Take from the Table	Yes	No	No	Majority	No
Approve Minutes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority	Yes
Point of Order	No	No	No	Is Ruled upon by the Chair	No
Parliamentary Inquiry	No	No	No	Is responded to by the chair	No
Previous Question	Yes	No	No	2/3	Yes
Reconsider	Yes	If motion to be reconsidered is debatable	No	Majority	No



**DOUGLAS COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARY**  
**Statistical Report**  
**FY 2016-2017**

	Year-to-Date			January 2017		
<b>Circulation</b>	Minden	Tahoe	Total	Minden	Tahoe	Total
Items Checked Out/Renewed	91,305	5,908	97,213	13,093	414	13,507
eCheckouts			5,939			847
New Cards Issued	776	70	846	96	2	98
Patrons	27,992	3,439	31,431	27,992	3,439	31,431
Library Visits	56,592	9,059	65,650	7,575	610	8,185
Inventory	104,985	26,775	131,760	104,985	26,775	131,760
Interlibrary Loans Requested	300	38	338	38	2	40
Interlibrary Loans Loaned	189	13	202	42	2	44
Homebound Patrons	24	-	24	24	-	24
Homebound Checkouts	1,151	-	1,151	134	-	134
Database Sessions			16,062			2,208
<b>Services</b>	Minden	Tahoe	Total	Minden	Tahoe	Total
Meeting Room Use	211	22	233	28	1	29
Meeting Room Attendance	2,532	283	2,815	336	12	348
Pine Nut Room Use	59	-	59	7	-	7
Pine Nut Room Attendance	295	-	295	35	-	35
Kids' Programs	169	18	187	25	3	28
Kids' Program Attendance	3,397	229	3,626	409	14	423
Teen Programs	2	1	3	1	-	1
Teen Program Attendance	132	4	136	7	-	7
Adult Programs	24	1	25	2	-	2
Adult Program Attendance	409	16	425	30	-	30
Total Programs	195	20	215	28	3	31
Total Program Attendance	3,938	249	4,187	446	14	460
Outreach	17	2	19	5	-	5
Public Computer Use	6,181	500	6,681	818	50	868
ADA pc Use	43	6	49	-	-	-
Wireless Use			10,259			1,440
Volunteers	391	81	472	46	1	47
Volunteer Hours	1,727	286	2,013	188	2	190

Useful Use January 2017						
DLT			DCL			
Internet			Internet		ADA	
Internet & Office	48		Internet & Office	647	Extended use	0
Large Print (LP)	2		Large Print (LP)	51	Restricted LP	0
			15-minute Internet & Office	91		
			Word processing	29		
Total		50	Total	818	Total	0

InfoUSA usage report  
Douglas County Public Library  
Fiscal year 2016-2017

InfoUSA Total  
Measured by number of logins

	Year-to-date			July 2016			August 2016			September 2016			October 2016			November 2016			December 2016			January 2017		
	In-house	External	Total	In-house	External	Total	In-house	External	Total	In-house	External	Total	In-house	External	Total	In-house	External	Total	In-house	External	Total	In-house	External	Total
InHouse Total	0	0	106			19			24			18			13			10			10			12
Measured by number of logs																								
Collection used																								
Business Database (U.S.)	10	61	71	0	12	12	0	16	16	0	1	1	2	4	6	0	0	0	1	0	0	7	4	11
U.S. Residential	71	5	76	13	0	13	19	0	19	7	1	8	2	0	2	25	0	0	4	0	0	4	0	0
Health Care	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Canadian Residential	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Canadian Business	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
U.S. Consumers	67	11	78	2	0	2	16	0	16	13	0	13	10	3	13	7	0	7	11	8	19	8	27	
Jobs	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Total	149	77	226	15	12	27	35	16	51	21	1	22	14	30	44	32	6	38	13	12	25	19	0	19
Measured by number of searches																								

Measured by number of searches